**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**POLICE COMMITTEE CONTINUES DELIBERATIONS ON THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 30 March 2022 –**The Portfolio Committee on Police today continued its deliberations on the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Amendment Bill [B25 – 2021].

The committee resolved that it cannot, in good conscience, adopt the amendment Bill without being satisfied that the South African Police Service (SAPS) has both the capacity and capability to implement the provisions contained in the amendment Bill. The committee reiterates that the amendment Bill is a crucially important tool in the criminal justice system and that the Bill is not stopped and does not face radical opposition, but rather that it needs further deliberations by the committee in the second term.

The committee has noted the concerns raised in many public submissions questioning the capacity of the SAPS Forensic Science Laboratories to effectively implement the provisions of the Bill. The committee has since the start of the sixth parliament, committed itself to intensify oversight over the forensic sciences division of the SAPS and will continue to do that.

The committee acknowledges the progress made by the SAPS in addressing the challenges faced in the forensic science laboratory division over the past couple of years and further acknowledges the significant progress made in the reduction of the backlog in DNA analysis. It commends the SAPS on the efforts that were made to achieve this progress.

Despite the progress made in this division, the committee is still not at ease with issues regarding the costing of the Bill, funding of the FSL division, maintenance of machinery and equipment, and procurement contracts to ensure the timely and effective delivery of forensic consumables. Furthermore, the committee has concerns related to the use of minimum force when taking buccal samples in custodial settings.

Although the committee realises that this Bill deals only with already convicted schedule 8 offenders, the recent proclamation by the President to bring the Act into full operation, places the amendments into a different light and the committee needs to look broader than just what is tabled before it. Therefore, the adoption of the Bill will only be completed once the committee is satisfied that it can be implemented. The committee will continue with this matter in the next term after recess.

The committee has today adopted its report on the public participation process on the amendment Bill. The report details the public submissions that were received on the Bill. The committee is satisfied with the positive and detailed discussions that took place during public hearings. It expresses its gratitude to the organisations and individuals that made submissions on the Bill and reiterates the importance of public participation when Parliament deals with legislation.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE, MS TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON.**

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